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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7604
INFO RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 8024
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ AUG LIMA 4094
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 9394
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4748
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS BOGOTA 007062

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: FARC: BAD DAY IN COLOMBIA AS THREE ATTACKS TARGET
COLAR

REF: BOGOTA 7002

Summary

¶1. (U) Three explosives attacks on July 31 in Bogota and other regions of Colombia appear to be FARC actions intended to display its strength in the lead-up to President Uribe's August 7 inauguration. Targets in all three cases were members of the COLAR, of whom 17 were killed and 30 wounded. Security forces will be heavily deployed in Bogota for the inaugural events. BOGOTA 7002 contains additional detail. End Summary.

Three Attacks, 47 COLAR Casualties

¶2. (U) 17 army soldiers and a civilian were killed and 30 soldiers were wounded on July 31 in three apparently coordinated attacks carried out by the FARC. The three attacks were:

- in Bogota, a car bomb was remotely detonated to coincide with the passing of two COLAR trucks transporting soldiers, killing a civilian bystander and wounding 21 soldiers (reftel). The incident occurred in the northwest of the city, a few blocks from the Jose Maria Cordoba Military Academy.
- near the town of Tibu in the Catatumbo region of Norte de Santander department, the COLAR received a tip-off on a supposed car bomb; the squad that went to defuse the bomb was then hit by explosive charges on the road and by gunfire from adjacent hills. 15 COLAR officers and soldiers were killed and three wounded. When others in the unit returned fire, the assailants fled towards the nearby Venezuelan border.
- in Guayacanas, Narino department, soldiers were similarly drawn into a trap, investigating a house where explosives were then detonated killing two soldiers and wounding six.

¶3. (U) These attacks fit the FARC's pattern of conducting terrorist attacks in the lead-up to elections and inaugurations. We expect the FARC to attempt additional attacks through August 7. Four years ago the FARC fired mortars at the Congressional National Palace in an effort to disrupt Uribe's first inauguration.

GOC Response

¶4. (U) In response to the attacks, President Uribe made reference to recent FARC overtures to the European Union, in which the FARC appealed to be removed from the EU's list of terrorist groups. Uribe said, "The world must not be fooled by these terrorists. They talk of peace, they are seeking to fool the EU... and (yet) they carry out these acts in Colombia."

¶5. (U) The GOC is meanwhile beefing up security in the capital in advance of Uribe's August 7 inauguration. Already about 23,000 police and 6,000 soldiers are deployed, most heavily in the central areas, where roads will be closed from August 4.
WOOD